



THE WARITH MAGAZINE

The Official Magazine of the Holy Shrine of Imam Hussain (as)

ASHURA IMMORTAL





EDITORIAL

In the Name of God the Compassionate the Merciful

It is a great honour to humbly present the first issue of The Warith magazine in the English language to the Master of our Age (af). The theme of this issue is the immortality of the Hussaini message as manifested so tragically on the plains of Karbala. Imam Hussain (as) reflected the lofty ideals and noble teachings of Islam in every step he (as) took and his sacrifice on the day of Ashura set about a series of existential consequences which are still felt today. Imam Hussain's (as) message, a revival of the pure teachings of the Holy Prophet (saw), is very pertinent at a time when Islam and Muslims are misunderstood and maligned. Each aspect of this message, be it spiritual, political, ethical, or sociological, is so profound and universal that not only we as members of the School of Ahl al-Bayt (as), but humanity at large, can draw inspiration from it in every era and generation.

Many hands have worked together to bring this issue to fruition. I would like to thank our content contributors, editors, designers, and The Batool Foundation, for their contributions.

May I humbly request our readers to recite a Surat Al-Fatihah for the founder of The Batool Foundation, Shaykh Ousman Bocoum and for all the deceased believers and lovers of Imam Hussain (as).



Dr. Zoheir Ali Esmail
Editor of The Warith Magazine

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A close-up photograph of a hand, likely belonging to a religious figure, wearing a ring with a red stone. The hand is holding a string of yellow prayer beads. The background is an ornate, metallic, and patterned surface, possibly a shrine or a decorative wall. The entire image has a reddish-orange tint.

Imam Hussain's (as) Stand Against Materialism

Imam Hussain's (as) journey from Madina to Karbala, where he and his family faced slaughter at the hands of an army of thousands, has often been interpreted by both Muslim and non-Muslim historians, as a failed uprising. Historians have raised questions about the potential impotence of the message of Islam, often reducing Islam to simply a political movement and depicting the battle of Karbala as a war for position, leadership and power. The battle of Karbala has often been presented as a footnote in the history of the expansion of Islam, while Yazid, the Umayyad caliph, brutally consolidated his hegemonic rule; and even though the battle did inspire the overthrow of the Umayyad dynasty by the Abbasids, they in turn then brutally suppressed the Shi'a. In spite of this, in most historical sources, the Abbasid period of rule is depicted as the Golden Era of Islam, characterised by rapid expansion and the patronisation of architecture, science, medicine and art.

However, Imam Hussain (as) himself never claimed to be leading an uprising. The objective behind his original plan to move from Madina to Kufa had been to serve the social and religious needs of the Muslims in Kufa. Imam Hussain (as) refusal to give allegiance to Yazid was not merely a political move. It encapsulated his refusal to submit his principles of asceticism, humility, truthfulness, and devotion to God, to Yazid's cynicism, egotism, hypocrisy, and devotion to worldly desires. Moreover, Yazid desired both to kill Imam Hussain (as) and defeat the principles for which he stood. The battle between Imam Hussain (as) and Yazid finds powerful resonance within the human conscience, because it symbolises humanity's perennial struggle to overcome the forces of evil within society.



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Prophet Muhammad (saw) has stated, 'Hussain is from me and I am from Hussain', meaning that he and Imam Hussain (as) possessed the same integrity, principles and values. In fighting Yazid, Imam Hussain (as) did not seek a position of power for himself. Rather, he only sought to protect and preserve the integrity of the faith that his grandfather, Prophet Muhammad (saw) had brought. However, in order to understand Imam Hussain's (as) actions fully, we need to reflect on the core message of Islam, as transmitted and taught by the Holy Prophet Muhammad (saw).



The battle between Imam Hussain (as) and Yazid finds powerful resonance within human conscience, because it symbolises humanities perennial struggle to overcome the forces of evil within society.

According to Islamic teachings, if a person invests all his focus and hopes in worldly desires and attachments, he is unable to grow spiritually and is liable to destroy his own soul. Worldly desires refer to materialistic and carnal desires. The Holy Qur'an also clarifies that every soul has a destination. The soul of every person that enters this world will also journey out of this world, to a specific spiritual state and location determined by the spiritual state in which the person dies. According to the teachings of the Holy Prophet (saw), the destruction of a person's soul refers to its corruption. The soul is corrupted when it succumbs to and embraces Satanic traits, such as greed, anger, malice, and envy. The message of Islam provides guidance regarding spiritual purification for both the individual and society at large. According to Islam, the universe comprises various interconnected worlds: the material world, the spiritual world, the angelic world, and the world of the Names and Attributes of God. When a society is guided by leaders who espouse exceptional moral values, knowledge and justice, these leaders are able to facilitate the spiritual ascent of individuals towards the highest levels of perfection through the various interconnected worlds. Following a spiritual path that trains a person to detach himself from worldly attachments also facilitates his soul's liberation. A liberated soul is not prone to turbulence in either difficulty or ease. It has attained inner peace, a deep realisation of the only Reality (God), and the wisdom to navigate safely and prudently through the choppy waters of life.

Islam also has its own historical perspective. The Holy Qur'an mentions that God sent prophets time and again to clarify to human beings that there is more to human existence than the life of this world. Chasing after worldly benefits at the cost of ignoring all spiritual and ethical considerations can never lead to true happiness or inner peace. In addition, according to the Holy Qur'an, obsessively pursuing worldly benefits inevitably leads to mischief and corruption on the earth. People that do so often oppress others, impoverish them, and violate their rights in order to enrich themselves. They may even murder others in an effort to consolidate their power.

Those who plot and scheme their way to power expedite a social and moral decay that makes society vulnerable to Satanic influences. They become the gates by means of which evil and corruption can enter a society. Hence, a corrupt leader will facilitate the rise to power of other corrupt people.

Thus, Imam Hussain's (as) journey from Madina to Karbala, also referred to as Imam Hussain's (as) 'mission', represents his ethical and spiritual stand against Yazid. As the purest symbol of the Islamic principles of justice, worldly detachment, knowledge, compassion, and truthfulness, Imam Hussain (as) stood against Yazid, who represented the opposite. Yazid did not believe in the divine message, prophetic teachings or spiritual and angelic worlds. Nor did he believe in or care about spiritual growth and perfection. He believed that there was nothing beyond this material life and that what was important in this material life was to ensure the dominance of one's clan. Hence, Yazid was determined to augment the power of the Umayyad clan, which had been politically, socially and morally defeated by the clan of Hashim, to which the Holy Prophet (s) and his family belonged. He was hell-bent on subjugating the clan of Hashim to the hegemonic power and control of the clan of Umayya. He was keen to seize the power and assets that had accrued to the Islamic movement due to so many people joining its ranks. Sooner or later, all movements that espouse high ethical ideals are likely to face the machinations of unscrupulous characters who seek to capitalise on the wealth and popularity that the movement has gained. Such personalities, who are enslaved by their desires, contribute to the establishment of a society based upon materialistic values. However, those who serve God, the absolute and transcendent Truth, contribute to the establishment of a society based upon the values of the higher worlds: selflessness, chivalry, and asceticism.

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The destruction of a person's soul refers to its corruption

Moving forward to the present time, we see that the elements of this drama have not changed. There are innumerable examples of forces of evil and materialistic enslavement at work. Many multinational conglomerates pay workers a pittance, exploiting cheap labour to make huge profits. Human trafficking is still rampant. In the last century, the natural environment has been devastated at an unprecedented rate due to mass deforestation, mass over-fishing, the smuggling of rare and endangered animals, the poisoning of soil and water systems through the mass overuse of pesticides, and countless other travesties against nature. The manipulation of food markets and the manufacturing of conflict and famine impoverish and starve mass populations across the globe.

The contemporary forces of injustice that deprive and oppress others may be regarded, symbolically, as the descendants of the wealth-obsessed and power-hungry armies of Yazid. Those who challenge and fight these forces of evil may be regarded as the symbolic descendants of Imam Hussain (as).

In the context of humanity's current struggles, remembering Imam Hussain (as) and what he stood for and died for reawakens and encourages the human spirit to rise in support and defence of selflessness, chivalry, and asceticism in the face of wide-scale corruption and greed. Imam Hussain (as) also stands as a mirror to every one of us with regard to our own moral dilemmas today.

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As mentioned, Imam Hussain's (as) stand against the armies of Yazid encapsulates the perennial human drama of struggle between the forces of honour and knowledge and the forces of depravity and ignorance. There is also another spiritual dimension to this.

Those who served in the army of Yazid considered themselves to be Muslims and performed Islamic rituals and practices. They prayed, fasted, and recited the Holy Qur'an, yet they fought God's theophany on earth.

Thus, the question arises: what does it mean to adhere to Islam? What is required to follow a divinely revealed path that calls for its followers to testify to the Truth? Is the recitation of holy scriptures and the performance of rituals and prayers sufficient? Or is it possible to compromise and stand with despotic forces, just because they happen to be dominant, even while one is still reading holy scriptures and performing prayers?

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What does it mean to adhere to Islam? What is required to follow a divinely revealed path that calls for its followers to testify to the Truth?

Facing the army of Yazid, Imam Hussain (as) appealed to them, for their sake, not for his own, saying 'If you don't have any religion, [then] at least be free men'. In short, do not become the slaves of your desires.

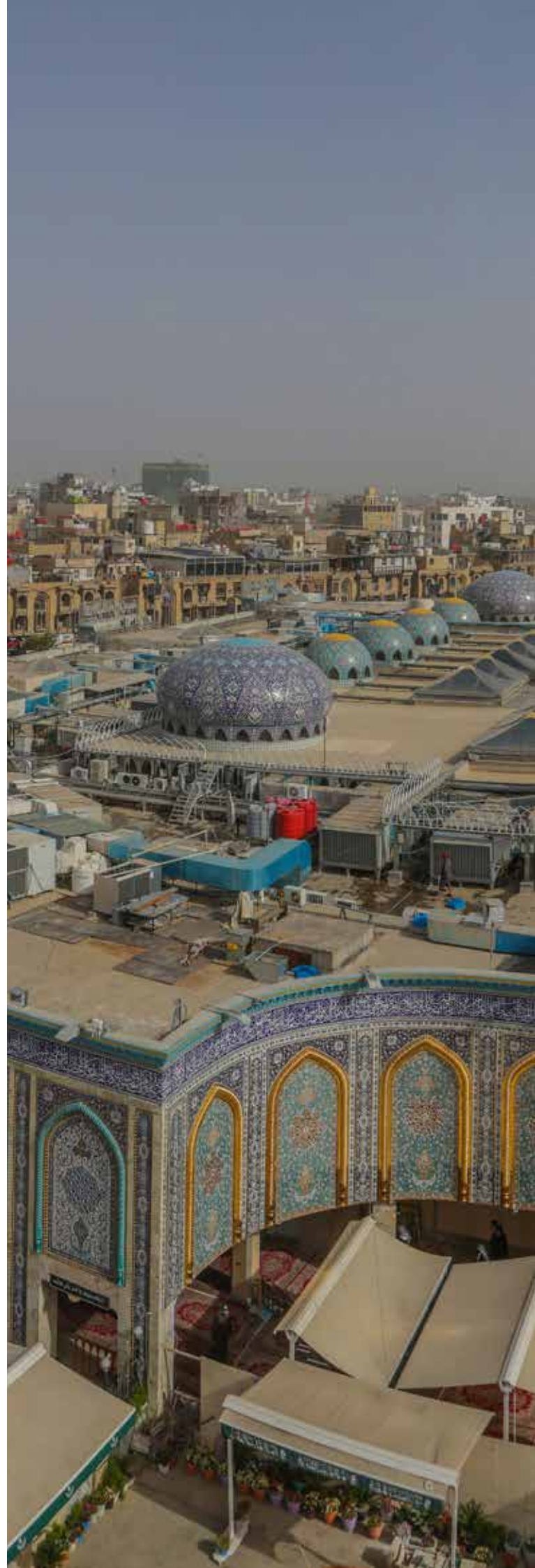
Imam Hussain's (as) mission reminds us of our true worth as human beings. It is a call to break free from the obsession to gain ever more. Although people around the world are striving to increase their wealth, the majority of the world's population remains impoverished and deprived. It seems that as people become increasingly materialistic, both spiritual and economic poverty increases. Of course, charities, social activists, and conscientious people are fighting to stem the fallout from the expansion of the so-called free market; however, they have been unable to defeat the powerful alliances of banks, corporations, arms dealers, oil dealers, and a myriad of other companies and groups, all colluding together to monopolise the majority of global wealth.

A powerful lesson that may be gleaned from the tragedy of Karbala is that every individual has a sacred responsibility to partake in the struggle for justice and beauty. We know that Imam Hussain (as) arrived on the plains of Karbala accompanied by his family and approximately one hundred companions, each of whom sacrificed his life in devotion to the Imam who was the perfect embodiment of truth, justice and chivalry. Without the support of a large army, there was little that even the best leader could do to prevent events from unfolding as they did, yet their impact is felt even today.

It may be seen, then, that actions may have powerful, long-term effects that permeate through the centuries. Even a small group of people can influence the thinking, ethics and practice of generations across the globe. Those who were bribed or intimidated into betraying Imam Hussain (as) lost sight of the fact that, ultimately, truth will prevail.

The journey of Imam Hussain (as) to Karbala with his family and loyal companions, his refusal to betray the principles of Islam, and his willingness to sacrifice his life for the sake of these principles, have resonated like shifting tectonic plates throughout history. Through the tragedy of Karbala, we learn the importance of unwavering commitment to truth and justice, even if the most powerful forces of corruption and despotism appear to be winning out.

Today, there are so many people around us who are desperately seeking a way out of a matrix that deprives them of both economic security and spiritual growth. They are neither able to rise from the bottom of the economic pile, nor do they know how to free their spirits from an excessively materialistic culture. Even if only a few of them can gain access to the message of Karbala and can extricate themselves from this matrix, that few may go on and inspire others. Through the tragedy of Karbala we realise that a single action taken for the sake of Truth can have a greater impact on humanity than the current hegemony of corporations, banks and intelligence services. Facilitating a transformation of hearts is the beginning of a transformation of our world.





The Immortality of Ashura



The Battle of Karbala holds a unique and unparalleled place in human history.

In Karbala, an extraordinary degree of injustice was inflicted upon the descendants of the Holy Prophet, Muhammad (saw). The battle was a highly unequal one, between approximately 72 supporters of Imam Hussain (as) and an army of a minimum of 10, 000 despatched by Ibn Ziyad. During the battle, the supporters of Imam Hussain (as) were brutally killed and their corpses were trampled upon, stripped and looted. The martyrs in Imam Hussain's (as) camp included the elderly, children, and even an infant aged 6 months. After massacring Imam Hussain (as), his companions and all the adult male members of his household with the exception of Imam Ali Zayn al-Abidin (as), Yazid's soldiers set fire to the tents that sheltered the Imam's womenfolk, looted and mistreated the women and children, and forced them to journey as shackled captives to Damascus, where they were imprisoned.

Although the oppression inflicted upon the companions and family of Imam Hussain (as) was cruel and barbaric, one may question whether the crimes against Imam Hussain (as) camp were any more savage or heinous than the genocides of contemporary history. For example, a chemical attack in Halabja against the Kurdish people in 1988 by the former Baathist regime in Iraq, resulted in the deaths of thousands of innocent civilians, including women and children. In the last century alone, a plethora of war crimes and injustices have taken place. Hence, if extent of bodily harm and number of casualties are considered the criteria for determining the worst injustices in human history, then the Battle of Karbala is overshadowed by many other historical and contemporary examples.

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One may question whether the crimes against Imam Hussain's (as) camp were anymore savage or heinous than the genocides of contemporary history.

Moreover, if the Battle of Karbala is considered unique due to the nobility of the aspirations of Imam Hussain (as) army, it can be argued that many others have also sacrificed their lives for noble, humanitarian causes.

Therefore, when it is claimed within the Shia tradition that the Battle of Karbala is a unique event finding no parallel in human history, either prior to or following its occurrence, what does this statement mean?

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When it is claimed within the Shia tradition that the Battle of Karbala is a unique event in human history...what does that mean?”



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To answer this important question, one must first understand the criteria that imbue an action with nobility and spiritual value. Often, the value of an action is determined by the manner in which it executed or the number of people who support and enable its execution. However, the intention that motivates an action is a more critical consideration in determining the action's ethical and spiritual value. Sometimes, the value of a virtuous action may be debased and corrupted by an evil intention. On the other hand, the ethical value and spirit of the same action may be uplifted by a sincere and noble intention. For example, a simple greeting may be an act of derision and offence if it is performed with the intention to mock and injure. Conversely, it may be an act of devotion and kindness if the greeting is performed with the intention to show love and care towards another person.

Furthermore, if a person greets another as an expression of his devotion to God and godly values, the spirit of the action may be elevated even further. The reward and benefits of actions that arise from a pure and sincere love and submission to God, transcend the material world and will be actualised in the hereafter. The purer the intention and soul from which an action arises, the more sublime an action is.

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The purer the intention and soul from which an action arises, the more sublime an action is.

It is for this reason that the strike of Imam Ali (as) in the battle of Khandaq was considered by the Holy Prophet (saw) to be of a greater value than the combined worship of all human beings and jinn. The strike of Imam Ali (as), in its outward and apparent form, was no different from any other sword strike in battle. However, because the action of Imam Ali (as) was more purely devoted to the love and pleasure of Allah (swt) than even the cumulative acts of worship of all other beings, it also surpassed them in spiritual value. The historical impact of Imam Ali's (as) pure and godly action, was also uniquely profound.

Hence, if we want to compare the spiritual loftiness of the Battle of Karbala with other events, we must first understand the motivation behind the mission of Imam Hussain (as), his companions, children and womenfolk. We must also evaluate the impact and consequences of his movement.

The movement of Imam Hussain (as) was a struggle in defence of the Islamic principles of justice, faith and morality. The value of Imam Hussain's (as) sacrifice can be best understood in light of this noble objective. We can only appreciate the greatness of Imam Hussain's (as) movement, if we understand the pre-eminent value of the Islamic principles for which he sacrificed his life. The integrity of the Islamic principles of truth, justice and virtue was so dear to Imam Hussain (as) that he not only sacrificed himself but also his beloved son Ali al-Akbar, his brother Abu al-Fadl al-Abbas and other members of his family.

In the last moments of his life, Imam Hussain (as) recited a supplication in which he described his devotion to God as the sole motivation behind his sacrifice. It revealed his desire to attain martyrdom purely for the love and pleasure of Allah (swt). Throughout the course of the battle, as he faced heart-wrenching tragedies and losses, Imam Hussain's (as) commitment to his divine mission, never wavered. A narrator who witnessed the day's events, reported, 'By God, I have never seen a defeated person, whose offspring and companions have been killed, more determined than him.' Pure love demands that a person be willing to surrender everything he has in service of his beloved. Indeed, Imam Hussain's (as) supreme sacrifice reflected his pure and sincere love for God.

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Pure love demands that a person be willing to surrender everything has in the service of his beloved.

When evaluating the uniqueness of the event of Ashura, we must also consider the consequences and impact of Imam Hussain's (as) movement. Sometimes, an act performed by a small number of people within a short period of time, has enduring consequences. Today, more than 1400 years after the Battle of Karbala, the tragedies of the day of 'Ashura remain a powerfully emotive source of inspiration for many. The event of 'Ashura also serves as a deep ocean from which invaluable and innumerable spiritual lessons and insight may be drawn.

The event of Ashura is also unique because it embodied Imam Hussain's (as) readiness to sacrifice his life, family, security and dignity, to preserve the religion of Allah (swt), and hence, Allah (swt) gave him the honour of being the saviour of Islam. Without Imam Hussain's (as) movement of resistance, Islam would have been destroyed at the hands of its enemies.

Both on an individual and societal level, Imam Hussain (as) serves as a paragon of submission to Allah (swt) and sacrifice in His way.

Like Imam Hussain (as), we must strive to dedicate our actions and lives to pursuing His will and pleasure. Whilst we may fall far short of attaining the lofty standard of self-sacrifice and devotion to God set by Imam Hussain (as), we must endeavour to be as Hussaini in our actions and intentions as we can.

Our love for Imam Hussain (as) connects our hearts to him and so we grieve for his suffering on the day of Ashura. However, Imam Hussain's (as) mission in attaining martyrdom was not to elicit our sympathy and hence, we must not be satisfied with merely shedding tears for our Imam. Rather, Imam Hussain's (as) path to martyrdom serves as a model for all servants of God who wish to follow an exemplary path towards His love and pleasure. A primary step in following this path is to increase our love for Imam Hussain (as) and understand more deeply, his character, virtues and aspirations. Thereafter, the more difficult and paramount struggle is to reflect Hussaini ideals and principles in our character and actions. uniquely profound.



Introducing Imam Hussain (as) to Humanity

Spiritual Advice for Organizations



In this short article I would like to remind us of a few important points. I will try to be brief and I pray to Him to enable me to communicate these points clearly and effectively so that I may be able to do justice to the subject at hand.

First of all, we are not merely interested in showing our love for Imam Hussain (as) and gaining reward (thawab) for it. Seeking His reward is definitely one incentive behind organizations which seek to serve the School of Ahl al-Bayt. However, I believe that we should be motivated by more than just the pursuit of reward in the hereafter.

Unfortunately, we sometimes become very selfish, even when it comes to religion and spirituality. Sometimes, we just want to add to our reward. We act like businessmen, the only difference being that instead of money, we seek compensation in the afterlife. And sometimes, the pleasure of Allah (swt) becomes a secondary consideration. Gaining thawab seems to be the main concern of many people, although what is forgotten is that a greater reward may be received for performing an action without the expectation of attaining a reward. In your work, business, and lives overall, you have often been blessed during moments when you least expected His grace.

¹ This paper is based on a lecture given on 25th Dec, 2016, by the author in a gathering in Mashhad



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Let us consider an example in the Holy Qur'an regarding Prophet Musa (as). Whilst traveling with his (as) family on a dark and presumably cold night, he (as) saw a fire. He (as) told his family to wait where they were whilst he (as) went to investigate. The instruction of Prophet Musa (as) to his family indicates that the fire was at a distance and Prophet Musa (a) was keen to investigate the fire on his own. A leader does not take his entire community into a situation where there is a potential risk of harm. It is his duty to examine and assess the situation or setting first. Thereafter, he will only lead his community towards it if it will benefit them.

When Prophet Musa (as) approached the fire, an incredible event occurred: God addressed him for the first time. God spoke to him and told him that He (swt) had chosen him to carry out a divine mission. The story is mentioned in the Holy Qur'an as follows:

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Did the story of Moses come to you, when he sighted a fire, and said to his family, 'Wait! Indeed, I discern a fire! Maybe I will bring you a brand from it or find some guidance at the fire.' So when he came to it, he was called, 'O Moses! Indeed, I am your Lord! So take off your sandals. You are indeed in the sacred valley of Tuwa. I have chosen you; so listen to what is revealed.'
(Qur'an 20:9-13)

Did Prophet Musa (as) expect this to happen while he (as) was traveling? No. Perhaps his maximum expectation was to travel safely with his family and arrive at his destination. However, Allah (swt) blessed him with a grace he (as) did not expect.

It is important to note that if Prophet Musa (as) had failed to be alert at this time, he (as) would have missed an immense opportunity. He (as) was not only farsighted, he (as) was also broad-sighted. He (as) was aware of what was behind him (as) and before him (as), to his right and to his left. This is how a leader must be. Because Prophet Musa (as) was alert and did not ignore or overlook what was before him, he (as) investigated the fire and found a beautiful blessing awaiting him.

Thus, we should be very alert and careful so that we do not miss the blessings and opportunities that come our way. In an interesting hadith, Imam al-Sadiq (as) states:

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With respect to what you have no hope for, be more hopeful than what you have hope for. Truly Musa (as) went (just) to bring a brand of fire to his family, but he returned to them as a Prophet and Messenger.

In all your activities, it is also very important to always be genuine in the love you show for people. Do not do anything merely for publicity. Rather, serve out of a sense of unconditional love. The Holy Qur'an states:

“

You are the best nation (ever) brought forth for mankind. (Qur'an 3:110)

This verse indicates that we should be the best people God has brought forth in the service of mankind. Our role is to be a community that works for [the benefit of] humanity, rather than ruling over them (li al-nas, not ala al-nas). As a Muslim community, we should not be interested in power or position; rather, we should desire to serve. We should serve humanity without any expectation of thanks or praise. Moreover, we should never seek to marginalize any sect in Islam. Serving others with the purest intention is best exemplified by the Ahl al-Bayt (as) who fed the needy whilst stating:

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We feed you only for the sake of Allah. We do not want any reward from you nor any thanks.
(Qur'an 76:9)

We should serve humanity by introducing Imam Hussain (as) to them. We believe that in all eras and every corner of the world, humanity needs the inspiration and guidance that the movement and personality of Imam Hussain (as) provide. Imam Hussain (as) movement and example are relevant and inspiring in all times and places. True servants of God are those whose spirit and impact transcend time and place.

Imam Hussain (as) was a true servant of God who effaced his ego and dedicated his every action and intention to seeking the pleasure of Allah (swt). Moreover, as indicated in the Holy Qur'an 33:33, Allah (swt) also purified him and the other members of the Ahl al-Bayt (as). The companions of Imam Hussain (as) were also selflessly devoted to seeking the pleasure of Allah (swt).

Imam Hussain (as) and his companions devoted and sacrificed their lives to uphold universal values of truth and justice and therefore, serve as universal models of inspiration and guidance.

Imam Hussain (as) plays a special role in paving the way for the reappearance and rise of Imam al-Mahdi (af). Many of the hadiths that refer to 'the end of times' mention Imam Hussain (as). Maybe people think that we should remember Imam Hussain (as) so that he is not gradually forgotten. Of course, there are personalities whose struggles and endeavours have become outdated with the passing of time. However, this is not the case for Imam Hussain (as). Imam Hussain (as) message and example is relevant to all times, including the future. As humanity's struggles and challenges increase with time, people's curiosity and interest in Imam Hussain (as) should increase. The best time for people to know and understand Imam Hussain (as) is the time approaching Imam al-Mahdi's (af) reappearance. However, people will not understand Imam Hussain (as) without effort on our part to educate them. Who will ensure that the knowledge of Imam Hussain (as) becomes widespread in our time? If we forego this responsibility, others will fulfil it. However, in so doing, we will be denying ourselves a great blessing.

Imam Hussain (as) is a universal figure whose teachings and message provide the solution to humanity's problems and the cure for their illnesses. And Imam Hussain (as) is ever more needed as we approach the time of Imam al-Mahdi (af).

I would like to refer to the following hadith of Imam Hussain (as) on the night of Ashura, in which he (as) quotes the Holy Prophet (saw):

“

My grandfather, the Messenger of God, said: "My son, Hussain, will be killed in Karbala whilst he is a stranger, alone, thirsty, and without help. Whoever helps him has helped me and has helped his son, the Hujjah (al-Mahdi)"²

Any worthy endeavour to help Imam Hussain (as) must also strengthen Islam and the Ummah. Those who think they can promote the teachings of the Ahl al-Bayt (as) by dividing the Ummah - pitting Shi'a against Sunni and Sunni against Shi'a - are wrong. Unity between Muslims is very important.

In the hadith above, the Holy Prophet (saw) states that not only has the one who helps Imam Hussain (as) helped me, he (saw) also states, 'Whoever helps Hussain has helped his son, the Hujjah [al-Mahdi]'.

This is important. Anything we do for Imam Hussain (as) with knowledge (marifah), insight (basirah), sincerity, and a correct objective, will help Imam al-Mahdi (af), whether we know it or not and whether we mention the name of the Imam (as) or not. Anything we do, in word or deed, that resembles Imam Hussain (as) or upholds his principles, helps Imam al-Mahdi (af). In some contexts, mentioning the name of the Imam (as) may be unwise. Either way, anyone who promotes the values of Imam Hussain (as) in the best way, helps Imam al-Mahdi (af).

There must be a dynamism in our efforts for Imam Hussain (as). Unfortunately, some people are static in their efforts for Imam Hussain (as). They remember the Imam (as) and cry for him; yet they do not proceed to the next step of drawing lessons for both the present and the future.

Hence, merely having a good intention, or undertaking a noble cause, is not enough. There are many aspects to consider and we must constantly reflect on the requirements of the great task of serving in the path of Imam Hussain (as).

Moreover, at every point of success, effort must be made to grow and advance further. In Surat al-Nasr, Allah (swt) describes the growth of Islam during the final years of the Holy Prophet's life, as a victory and success that is granted by Him:

“

When Allah 's help comes with victory, and you see the people entering Allah 's religion in throngs... (Qur'an 110:1-2)

In this surah, Allah (swt) advises the Holy Prophet (saw) that when victory comes and people flock towards the path of God in large numbers, he (saw) should thank Allah (swt) for His blessings. At the time of success, the Holy Prophet (saw) is advised to praise and glorify Allah (swt) and ask for forgiveness. Similarly, we should also thank Allah (swt) in times of success and not allow conceit and arrogance to creep into our hearts. Arrogance not only diminishes our successes, it inverts them into failures.

In a well-known hadith, Imam al-Sadiq (as) states:

“

*The one in whose heart self-admiration ('ujb) permeates, is destined to be destroyed.*³

If any person, organization, or nation, overlooks the blessings of Allah (swt) and takes full credit for every success, the success is lost. When one sees success, he should increase his worship (ibadah) and seek Allah's (swt) forgiveness (istighfar):

“

Then celebrate the praise of your Lord, and plead to Him for forgiveness. Indeed, He is all-clement. (Qur'an 110:3)

One who follows God's command as detailed in the last verse of Surat al-Nasr, does not see any success as a reflection of his own actions and merits. Rather, he worries that due to his shortcomings and mistakes, his access to the grace and mercy of Allah (swt) may be reduced. If we had clearer insight into our actions and intentions, we would realise that most of the time, we create barriers between ourselves and the mercy of Allah (swt). We should endeavour to reduce our sins and character flaws such as arrogance because they restrict our capacity to receive Allah's (swt) grace.

I will now mention a few lines from Dua Makarim al-Akhlaq that provide guidance for achieving success in our communities and organisations. Imam Zayn al-Abidin (as) states in this dua:

“

Exalt me and afflict me not with pride.

In this supplication, Imam Zayn al-Abidin (as) asks Allah (swt) for honour and dignity. Perhaps the most important message for humanity that can be derived from the life and movement of Imam Hussain (as) is the importance of upholding one's honour and dignity. Imam Hussain (as) should be introduced to the wider society as a paragon of integrity and dignity. Although a human being's need for food, shelter and clothing are his primary needs, he also requires dignity and self-respect. If a person's basic needs are met but he lives without honour and dignity, the quality and value of his life are significantly diminished.

However, if Allah (swt) gifts a person with honour and dignity in society, he should not consider himself special. He should not become proud and conceited.

“

Exalt me and afflict me not with pride.

In this supplication, Imam Zayn al-Abidin (as) asks Allah (swt) to grant him honour and respect whilst also protecting him from becoming proud. It is a challenge for us as human beings to maintain our humility when we are honoured and admired in a society. When people praise us for our successes, we are at risk of thinking we are special or superior to others. We may trace our success to our talents, hard work, or virtues and feel proud of ourselves. We may even wonder why others are not as respected and accomplished as we are. We tend to forget that in granting us a good reputation and success in life, God may be testing us to see how humble and grateful we are.

“

Make me worship Thee and corrupt not my worship with self-admiration!

Our service to humanity should be devoted to Allah's (swt) pleasure. It should be free of self-interest and vanity. We should make every effort to guard our humanitarianism from being corrupted by self-admiration. When acts of service and kindness are devoid of a sincere and pure intention, they are hollow in spirit and value.

Later in the dua, Imam Zayn al-Abidin (as) supplicates:

“

And raise me not a single degree before the people without lowering me its like in myself.

This line of supplication emphasises the importance of increasing our humility as our dignity and respect in society increases. If our standing and status in society increases by 10%, we should strive to increase our humbleness by 10% also. It is not sufficient for a person to maintain his level of humility as he rises in success and dignity; his modesty and humbleness should increase.

However, if Allah (swt) gifts a person with honour and dignity in society, he should not consider himself special. He should not become proud and conceited.



...and bring about no outward exaltation for me without an inward abasement in myself to the same measure.

In this line of supplication, Imam Zayn al-Abidin (as) asks Allah (swt) to grant him respect in society and humbleness within himself in equal measure. As members of humanitarian organisations, we must be very careful not to compromise our humility as we promote the good work and services our institutions undertake. Even as we market and promote various projects and campaigns, we must maintain a degree of humility. This humility may be reflected in our willingness to interact with other organisations, share ideas, and accept critical feedback.

I would like to conclude with a final point of reflection. We must always remember that truth (haqq) and falsehood (batil) are binary opposites. Like light and darkness, they are opposed to each other. We must always support the truth and challenge falsehood. Aligning ourselves to the truth does not mean considering ourselves to be the sole representation and voice of truth. Rather, supporting the truth requires a recognition of where truth and virtue lies and moving towards it with humility and sincerity. We must strive to reflect the light and teachings of Imam Hussain (as) and the Ahl al-Bayt (as) as sincerely and humbly as we can, without misconstruing our actions and organizations to be perfect paragons of truth and virtue. We can never claim that we are certainly and entirely on the side of the truth. It is a struggle - a lifelong struggle - to seek and follow the truth. Imam Ali (as) was one of the very few, unique people who epitomized the truth in his every intention and action:



Ali is with the truth; and the truth is with Ali.

The unique position of being synonymous with the truth, is held by infallible personalities like Imam Ali (as). We do not qualify for this position. Hence, we must never assume that we are always firmly treading on the path of truth.

We must be aware of the likelihood that we may falter on the correct path or step in the wrong direction. Hence, achieving and maintaining a close and committed alignment to the truth requires vigilance and continual effort.

Furthermore, the truth can never be served or promoted by means of falsehood. We cannot spread light by means of darkness.

We can never serve Allah (swt) by utilising Satanic tools and strategies; lying, dishonesty, selfishness, jealousy and other vices cannot help in our struggles to uphold and spread the truth.

One of Satan's greatest victories is to convince good people to use false and evil means to attain a noble objective. Those who fall into Satan's trap have been thoroughly deceived. How can a person serve Allah (swt) through sin and immorality?!

The example of Imam Hussain (as) provides the best and most inspiring model of serving the truth in the purest way. On the day of Ashura, as Imam Hussain (as) faced immense sorrow and suffering, he (as) never wavered in his submission and devotion to Allah (swt). Sometimes, people face the death of one, two or a few loved ones through the course of their entire lives and consequently, they sink into misery and despair. However, Imam Hussain (as) witnessed the brutal massacre of so many members of his (as) immediate family and closest companions within the space of a few hours and yet, he (as) remained fully committed to his (as) mission and pleased with God's decree. Nor did Imam Hussain (as) compromise his noble principles or virtues in the slightest, even during the most challenging moments of battle.

Did Imam Hussain (as) at any point in his revolution, lie to his enemies or deceive his friends by making false promises? Did he (as) show any sign of fear, selfishness, jealousy, despair, or moral weakness? We should draw inspiration from the noble example of Imam Hussain (as) and remind ourselves and each other to consistently follow the truth without compromise or corruption.



The SALĀT of 'ĀSHŪRA'

The Salāt of 'Āshūra' begins with 'Alī 'Akbar's call.
From the clan of Banī Hāshim, he's the very first to fall!

With no masjid in sight, the companions form a wall.
But, its ceiling this day will be the arrows that fall!

Wudū' in Karbalā'? Not possible! For no water!
In its place, blood will have to suffice straight from the slaughter!

And what of a prayer mat? Will it be from woven spear handles?
Last night all prayed peacefully, their hymns by the light of candles!

But, today even the opportunity to pray is vehemently denied.
The attacks of Shaytān's minions at prayer-time will not subside!

Hussain raises his hands to the Heavens in qunūt his hands are not bare!
Instead, his murdered infant in his hands – what a heart-wrenching affair!

And what of 'Abbās' supplication in Karbalā' as he stands?
Filled or empty, his qunūt's without the use of his fallen hands!

The Salāt of Zaynab is with ash for snatched is her veil.
Hussain's last wish to her was: Never leave Salāt al-Layl!

What to prostrate upon, which is between GOD and man, its best portal?
Hussain's blood soaked forehead upon the sand makes Karbalā' immortal!



Written by:
'Abū al-Hasan (Muhammad Yāsīn)
10th of Muharram al-Harām, 1440
The Holy Shrine of as-Sayyidah Fātimah al-Ma'sūmah [s],
The Holy City of Qom

Q&A

This is where our contributors and editors answer your questions, so please keep sending them to alwarith@imamhussain-lib.com

Q What is the difference between a hadīth qudsī and a prophetic hadīth?

A A prophetic hadīth is one which narrates a saying, action or tacit agreement of the Prophet (saw). On the other hand, a hadīth qudsī is a tradition in which an Infallible narrates a saying from God, which is not part of the Qur'ān. It is called a hadīth qudsī as the word quds signifies holiness and purity, and since these words are attributed to God, these types of tradition are given this name. While a hadīth qudsī is the narrated word of God, it is not intended to be inimitable in the way that the Qur'ān is. Similarly, while the Prophet (saw) is inspired, his (saw) words are not the direct word of God.

Q What is the intellect (aql)?

A Linguistically, the origin of the intellect (aql) in the Arabic language signifies to contain or capture. The term is used in the context of bridling animals, as they are captured by the bridle. Humans have the faculty of intellect which bridles them from ignorance. The Prophet is reported to have said: "The intellect is a bridle from ignorance." The term has been used in Islamic scriptural sources with different meanings. Hurr al-Āmilī list the following three uses in his books Wasā'il al-shī'a:

1. The faculty which distinguishes between good and bad, as well as comprehending the causes of things.
2. It is a state and a characteristic which calls towards choosing what is good and beneficial and rejecting that which is harmful.
3. Intellect means knowledge, and that is why its opposite is ignorance not madness.

There are also other definitions of the intellect according to the nuances of its terminological use in the various sciences.

Q Is it true that Shaykh Sudūq thought that the Prophet (saw) could be made to forget?

A There is a difference between being made to forget by God (ishā') and forgetting (sahw). Shaykh Sudūq considered it possible for the Prophet (saw) to forget but not in the same way that we forget, as his (saw) forgetfulness is from God. His (saw) forgetfulness (sahw) is therefore being made to forget by God (ishā'). The purpose of this being made to forget, according to Shaykh Sudūq is to teach us that he (saw) is a created human and so he (saw) should not be worshiped, and so the laws of forgetfulness could be explained. Our forgetfulness, on the other hand, is from Satan, and Satan has no way to influence the Prophet (saw) (see *Man lā yahduruhu al-faqīh*, vol. 1 p. 358).

Shaykh Mufīd disagrees with this opinion and expresses his own views in a separate treatise on the subject. His first argument is that the reports of the Prophet (saw) forgetting are single reports (āhād) which cannot lead us to certainty that these events took place. Rather, Shaykh Mufīd considers these reports as fabricated and he also does not consider Shaykh Sudūq's differentiation between forgetfulness from God and forgetfulness from Satan to be based on any evidence. In any case, the opinion that the Prophet (saw) forgot is a minority opinion amongst the scholars of the school of Ahl al-Bayt (as).





THE BATOOL (AS) FOUNDATION
مؤسسة البتول عليها السلام

The next issue of The Warith magazine is about Lady Fatimah (as).

*Please send contributions for all future issues, comments and questions to:
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